

Application No.: 10/828,272

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-8 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 4, 6 and 7 have been amended. Claim 8 was previously withdrawn. After entry of the foregoing claim amendments, claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-8 will remain pending and under consideration.

No new matter is being presented, and approval of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohtsuji et al. (U.S. 2002/0156570 A1) (hereinafter “Ohtsuji”) in view of Morimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,351,706) (hereinafter “Morimoto”). The rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. The following is a comparison between embodiments of the present invention and the cited references.

Amended independent claim 1, for example, is directed to an information providing apparatus for a vehicle comprising: a customizing device configured to allow each of a plurality of users to customize audio guidance specific to each of the plurality of users and store the customized audio guidance in the user information storage device in correspondence to each of the plurality of users; and an interactive voice response device having a speech recognition function and providing audio guidance, configured to identify a user among the plurality of users, obtain the customized audio guidance specific to the identified user from the user information storage device and engage in a dialogue with the user through an automatic voice response via a telephone line using the customized audio guidance obtained from the user information storage device. (See page 17, line 3, through page 21, line 6, of the present specification for support).

The Examiner notes that Ohtsuji fails to disclose an interactive voice response device configured to store the customized audio guidance in a user information storage device for use in subsequent dialogue with the user. Hence, the Examiner cites Morimoto as disclosing these features. Specifically, the Examiner cites column 3, lines 34-54, and column 4, lines 59-67, of Morimoto as teaching a vehicle navigation apparatus, in which a data storage unit (3) stores audio/guidance data necessary for route guidance, and a central processor (4) executes programs interactive with voice input through an input device (1).

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Morimoto discloses speech conversation processing in a navigation apparatus (see column 3, lines 34-54 and 63-66). The data storage unit (3) described by Morimoto merely stores data required for computation of a geographical travel route, display/audio guidance data and application programs and/or operating systems. Morimoto, however, does not teach or suggest a customizing device configured to allow each of a plurality of users to customize audio guidance specific to each of the plurality of users and store the customized audio guidance in the user information storage device in correspondence to each of the plurality of users; and an interactive voice response device having a speech recognition function and providing audio guidance, configured to identify a user among the plurality of users, obtain the customized audio guidance specific to the identified user from the user information storage device and engage in a dialogue with the user through an automatic voice response via a telephone line using the customized audio guidance obtained from the user information storage device.

That is, the simple route guidance, as disclosed by Morimoto, should not be considered equivalent to allowing each of a plurality of users to customize audio guidance specific to each of the plurality of users and store the customized audio guidance in the user information storage device in correspondence to each of the plurality of users. It follows, therefore, that the simple route guidance of Morimoto is incapable of identifying a user among the plurality of users, and obtaining the customized audio guidance specific to the identified user from the user information storage device, as recited in independent claim 1.

As a result, it is submitted that neither Ohtsuji nor Morimoto, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of independent claim 1 described above. Independent claim 7, as amended, recites features substantially similar to those described above with reference to claim 1. Thus, it is further submitted that independent claim 7, as well as the pending dependent claims, patentably distinguish over the cited art.

Independent claim 4 recites that the interactive voice response device records information provided to the user in the past, customizes the audio guidance by using a set of information most frequently provided to the user among different sets of information previously provided to the user, stores the customized audio guidance in the user information storage device in correspondence to the user, and engages in a dialogue with the user through an automatic voice response via a telephone line using the customized audio guidance stored in the user information

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storage device in correspondence to the user. (See page 26, line 30, through page 30, line 10, of the present specification for support).

Ohtsuji discloses that an individual information database 310 can additionally store a user history, such as past information search results of each user. However, Ohtsuji does not disclose that the interactive voice response device customizes the audio guidance by using a type of information *most frequently provided to the user among different sets of information previously provided to the user*. It follows, therefore, that Ohtsuji does not teach or suggest that the customized audio guidance is stored in the user information storage device in correspondence to the user, and the interactive voice response device engages in a dialogue with the user through an automatic voice response via a telephone line using the customized audio guidance stored in the user information storage device in correspondence to the user.

Further, Morimoto fails to cure the deficiencies of Ohtsuji described above. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 4 patentably distinguishes over the cited references, alone or in combination.

Respectfully submitted,

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